1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Food (other than meat) is provided on the day of the burial by the women of the home at which the burial takes place, on the succeeding day by visiting relatives, and on the third day by village neighbours. Women neighbours, like woman relatives, often bring gifts of bark-cloth belts (*amakiba*) with which to bind up the bellies of their bereaved friends, who are all atremble and full of fear, and so support them. These belts symbolize the sympathy of friends in the fearful grief of the mourners. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means that she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'[1] And neighbours, like relatives and close friends from other chiefdoms, may bring cloths which are used to wrap the corpse and bind up the bellies of the chief mourners. But these gifts of food, firewood, belts, and cloth are the limit of a neighbour's obligations; very rarely does a neighbour bring a bull to kill for the funeral feast, whereas close kinsmen and affines are obliged to provide a bull or cow for this purpose if they have one. And neighbours take virtually no share in the elaborate ritual which follows for cleansing relatives from the contagion of death, driving the thought of the deceased out of their minds, and bringing back his spirit to bless the home. Their only part is to bring small gifts of millet from which to brew the beer drunk at the close of this ritual.

At an ordinary birth there is very little ceremony and the village as a group is not concerned, though close friends will help the mother during her confinement, fetching wood and water for her, and bringing occasional gifts of cooked food; but twin births are regarded as fearful and dangerous, and an elaborate ritual is performed to cleanse relatives from the contagion which, if left untreated, is believed to lead to serious swelling of the arms, legs, and stomachs, accompanied by diarrhoea. Relatives are treated with many medicines, while village neighbours are sprinkled with one only, but their cattle, especially the cattle herded with those of the man who has begotten twins, are thought to be in danger. At one twin ritual we watched there was some discussion whether all the cattle of the age-village should be treated, or only those of the herd-group to which the father of the twins belonged. Finally it was decided that on previous occasions all the cattle of the village had been treated, and a message was sent

[1] *cf.* Godfrey Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. XIII (1939), p. 12.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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XIII. DISPLAY—THE *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A MARRIAGE FEAST
A woman in the foreground is wearing the traditional brass body-rings

[facing p. 130]

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[3]
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XIV. A MEN'S *UKUMOGA* DANCE AT A FUNERAL

[facing p. 131]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

dead man'. Sometimes, immediately after the burial, the chief mourners, both men and women, wail outside near the newly-filled grave.

Very many of the women relatives, a few of the men relatives, and some of the neighbours smear their heads and faces with mud or pot-black as a sign of grief (*kyo kesa*). Such an expression of grief is thought extravagant by the Christians who have themselves abandoned the custom. One Christian explained: 'The pagans smear themselves with mud because they tremble with fear at a death—but we do not tremble; the pagans are very sorrowful because they say: "Our friend has vanished from our eyes and we shall never meet him happily again." '

It is also the custom for the women relatives to bind one another's bellies with strips of bark-cloth, and for their woman friends to bind them also. These bark-cloth belts are called *amakiba* and symbolize the fearful grief and mutual sympathy of the mourners, and the sympathy of their friends. One women, who was taking two belts to tie up the bellies of two mourning friends whose husband had died, explained: 'I give them these to tie round their bellies because they are all a-tremble, they are full of fear.' And when she was asked why men did not thus support one another, she replied: 'They are not afraid like women, they do not tremble much.' But there is evidence that, before the coming of the Europeans, men also wore *amakiba* 'and even now if a chief dies his men often wear *amakiba* for one day'. The Christian women have kept the custom, but they emphasize more the aspect of sympathy and less that of fear. 'If a woman wears many belts at a burial that means she has many friends; her passionate grief is comforted by their friendship.'

Sometimes on the first day, and usually on the last two or three days of a burial, there is dancing as well as wailing. Dancing begins late in the morning to the accompaniment of three or four drums, in the swept courtyard of the dead man's homestead; gradually it attracts more and more dancers, more and more of the attention of the onlookers, until the wailing is confined to the chief women mourners inside the hut, and the dance is the most conspicuous part of the proceedings. It is led by young men dressed in a special costume of ankle-bells and cloth skirts and, traditionally, bedaubed with red and white clay. All hold spears and leap wildly about, stamping down the soft earth of the grave as they dance. There is little common movement, each dances

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

tradition of the leaping dance and show ourselves to the girls!" And so it is with the women, some of the young women do not come to mourn but to call the war-cry to the boys! Those who come to mourn go into the hut and weep and weep. The young men say that they dance by reason of the women. The old men say that in the past it was different, it was war; the women ran behind the fighters watching the battle and calling the war-cry. And we all say that the present custom of dancing is the softer custom of a peaceful land.'

As the old significance of the dance to the majority of the participants was a lively salute to the dead man's fighting quality and a heightened sense of their own, so now it is his sexual quality which they honour and their own which they enjoy. 'Why', we asked a young man, 'do you dance nowadays at burials? There is little or no warfare and the dead man was never a fighter!' His answer came almost in the traditional form of words: 'We think that he too danced before the women, he was a brave dancer (*mogi*), and so we too dance (*ukukina*) at his death.'

'He too was a brave dancer (*mogi*).' The word *mogi* is from the verb *ukumoga* which refers to the ordinary dances of sexual display in contrast to the war-dance (*ukukina*). It is the war-dance which is still normally danced at death. Not only, however, is its significance being assimilated to that of the ordinary dances of recreation, as this quotation clearly shows, but these other dances are now often performed at burials. Near Rungwe Mission the pagans dance the war-dance on the first day of a burial and sometimes on the second day as well, but always on the third day the dance is changed. The men abandon cloth skirts, spears, and ankle-bells and put on their best clothes, an ample white toga being particularly fashionable; the women adorn themselves with great care and some put roses in their hair. The dance is no longer a wild mêlée, but is slow and graceful; and its sexual significance is now apparent, not only in the faces of the dancers and the comments of the bystanders, but also in the forms of movement.

This custom is new. None of the chief mourners takes part in the dance, though they watch it. In the war-dance, however, the chief mourners among the men are expected to participate, and some of them always do so. 'The (men) relatives dance if they have strength, they weep first and then dance. For if they all sit still and no one of them dances we others say that they have not mourned him properly.' But they do not all dance. One old man whose

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

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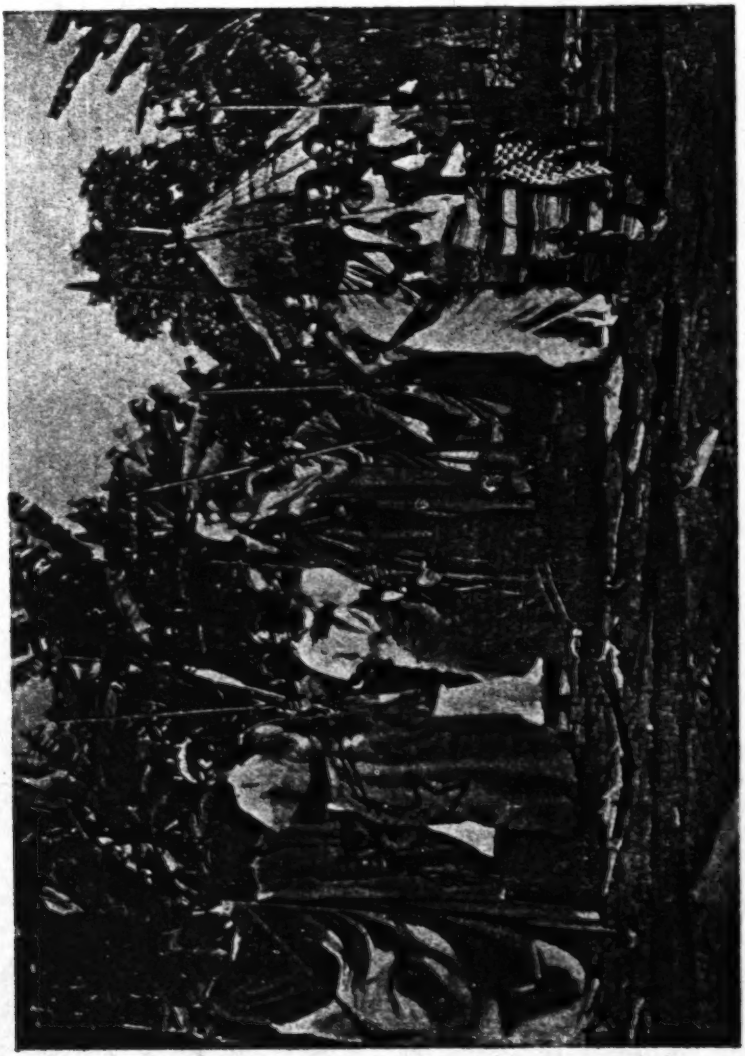

6. The groomsmen dance the stamping dance

[facing p. 101]

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

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A PROHIBITIONIST.

When food runs low, it is the duty of the chief to prevent undue consumption. The man in the picture has been sent out to prohibit the eating of bananas before a fixed date. He is wearing banana leaves and calabashes. Sometimes he carries a wooden rifle and a bandolier.

[FACING p. 272]

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

trader brought in other seed. The trader himself planted a large plot and his success seems to have stimulated the Nyakyusa to follow suit. There was a slow but gradual development of planting and by 1932 it was estimated that some 500 tons of hand-hulled rice were sold. It had become clear that the alluvial flood plains around the northern tip of Lake Nyasa were ideally suited to paddy growing. Until 1942 the people continued to hand-hull their crop and sell the rice, but in that year they were persuaded to sell the paddy direct to a locally established mill. Following initial difficulties in milling, handling and marketing, the Government built a store capable of holding 14,000 bags and it also took over the whole of the marketing with a seconded District Officer in charge. In 1947 the cultivators formed their first co-operative society. This movement has been encouraged by Government and the local Co-operative Union now deals with storage and marketing with the guidance of a Government Co-operative Officer.

The figures of sales of rice and paddy are given in Table II.[1]

Paddy has become a well-established crop, not only as the single cash crop of the region, but also as a food crop second only (or even equal) to the traditionally staple banana. About four-fifths of all arable holdings are paddy fields – though parts of these are used for dry season crops of maize, beans, etc. Virtually every Nyakyusa land-holder now grows paddy, and the vast majority regard it as their main crop. Cultivation is mainly by ox-plough followed by broadcast sowing and hand-weeding. Government efforts to encourage nurseries and planting out in rows have so far been entirely unsuccessful. Yields and perhaps quality too are thought to be lower than need be; the chief factor in production seems to be the degree of natural flooding during the wet season.

TABLE II

SALES OF RICE AND PADDY, 1932-56*

	tons		tons
1932 ..	500	1945 ..	1,200
1933 ..	600	1946 ..	2,700
1934 ..	600	1947 ..	3,300
1935 ..	600	1948 ..	2,100
1936 ..	700	1949 ..	3,700
1938 ..	700	1950 ..	2,300
1939 ..	1,200	1951 ..	1,200
1940 ..	1,500	1952 ..	2,000
1941 ..	1,600	1953 ..	5,700
1942 ..	2,200	1954 ..	5,900
1943 ..	2,800	1955 ..	5,700
1944 ..	2,900	1956 ..	3,000

*1932-41—hand-hulled rice, estimates only.
1942-47—paddy, sold through Government agency.
1948-56—paddy, sold through cultivators' co-operatives.

The cultivation of paddy requires relatively large-sized holdings due to the nature of the crop and the local extensive method of agriculture – for example, to produce a given income requires a far larger area of paddy in the Lake Plains than of coffee in the Northern Highlands of Nyakyusa country. As paddy cultivation became established, men increased their arable holdings in order to earn their money incomes. Larger holdings, rather than improved agricultural techniques, have become directly connected with higher incomes, and so the demand for more land set in. Assisted by the now general use of ploughs, paddy growing increased rapidly wherever it was found ecologically possible – i.e., within the alluvial flood plains and the coterminous area of annual natural flooding. Before this new demand for land emerged there were, even in the most highly populated parts, extensive areas which were more or

1. Information has been supplied by the Co-operative Officer, Tukuyu.

13: Lehmann E-5 (1939)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

These dances seemed to be a representation of "sex appeal" or courting. Each new phase of the dance was introduced by the advancing of one or two young women fairly near to the side of the men, then each retreated followed by the whole lines of both the sexes. If the youngest girls present who stood mostly behind the "dancing" line (i. e. the group of the advancing women and older girls) were to come too near the proper dancing place, they were driven back. The older people and the *amafumu* were only spectators.

The women had no special dancing dress, but the men did. They now wore mostly a sort of tight jackets or sweaters and wide robes, coloured or with patterns.

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Synopsis

Verfasser legt seine Ermittlungen vor, die er während seines dreimonatigen Aufenthalts im Dorfe der Masoko (die zu den Nyakyusa gehören sammelte. Sie geben einen Einblick in die damals, 1939, überwiegend traditionsgebundene Lebensweise dieses Stammes, namentlich bezüglich der Medizinmänner und der Behandlung der Kranken. Um im Falle der Schwester des Häuptlings die Ursache der Erkrankung zu ermitteln, wurde ein Wahrsager gerufen, der bei einer Sitzung den Ehemann als Urheber feststellte. Zur Heilung wurden vom Häuptling Zeremonien am Grabe von dessen Vater angeordnet. Außerdem beschreibt Verfasser aus eigener Erfahrung die Trauerzeremonie nach dem Tode eines Kindes, die Initiation eines verlobten Mädchens u. a.

291 belts are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More
301 and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into
291 vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the
177 shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian
[139] shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a
[556 piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was
482] hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

291 Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger
[292 men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or
535] sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned
[302 with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts.
237] After work especially the older man wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a solitary spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *amabi* at an earlier age.

531 *13. Art.* One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifigo*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below